

***DIASEMIA ACCALIS* (WALKER, 1859) (LEP.: PYRALIDAE) AN
ADVENTIVE SPECIES NEW TO BRITAIN**

DAVID J. L. AGASSIZ

*The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.***Abstract**

The first occurrence of *Diasemia accalis* (Walker, 1859) (Lep.: Pyraloidea: Spilomeninae) in Britain is documented and the moth is illustrated in colour.

Discussion

After the night of 24 – 25 May 2004, I found an unfamiliar spilomenine pyralid in the moth trap in my garden in Gravesend. It was immediately recognisable as a *Diasemia* Hübner species, since I had come to know *D. monostigma* Hampson in Africa where this is a common garden species. Goater (1986) gives characters for separating *D. reticularis* (Linnaeus) from *Diasemiopsis ramburialis* (Duponchel); according to these characters my species was *reticularis*, but the forewings did not match the illustrations in Goater (*op. cit.*) or Palm (1986). *D. reticularis* is a rare migrant and there was no other evidence of a migration at that time – the wind had been a light south easterly, and the date was early in the year.

The next week I happened to be browsing through Robinson et al. (1994) when I noticed an illustration of *Diasemia accalis* (Walker), which matched my specimen. I consulted the series of *reticularis* and *accalis* in the Natural History Museum and was able to confirm that my specimen was *accalis*. The distinguishing characters given by Shaffer (in Robinson *et al*) left no doubt.

Diasemia accalis is slightly smaller than *D. reticularis*. The forewings are more clearly and contrastingly marked, but it does not have the chequered fringes of both wings which are characteristic of *reticularis*. These characters are easily seen in the illustration (Plate I).

Diasemia accalis occurs in South East Asia from India to Japan. How it came to be in Gravesend is a matter of speculation. There is a large Asian population and consequently a considerable amount of travel and trade, especially with India. The life history is not known.

Diasemia accalis is not included in either the most recent British Isles moth list (Bradley, 2000) or the recent list of European Lepidoptera species (Karsholt & Razowski, 1996). In terms of its position in the British checklist, I suggest that it should follow *D. reticularis* as species number 1402a, although the inclusion of adventives in the main British list can be regarded as a nuisance.

References

- Bradley, J. D., 2000. *Checklist of Lepidoptera recorded from the British Isles*. Privately published.
Goater, B. 1986. *British Pyralid Moths, a guide to their identification*. Harley, Colchester.
Karsholt, O. and Razowski, O., 1996. *The Lepidoptera of Europe: A distributional checklist*. Apollo Books.

Palm, E. 1986. *Nordeuropas Pyralider*. Danmarks Dyreliv Bind 3. Copehagen.

Robinson, G. S., Tuck, K. R. & Shaffer, M. 1994. *A Field Guide to the smaller moths of south-east Asia*. The Natural History Museum and Malaysian Nature Society, Kuala Lumpur.



Plate I: *Diasemia* species. 1: *D. accalis* (Walker), Gravesend, West Kent, 24.v.2004; 2: *D. reticularis* (L.), Zeller collection, BMNH.

SUBSCRIBER NOTICE

The North West Wales Moth Report for year 2002 is now available at the knockdown price of £5, inclusive of postage. This second annual report lists 788 moth species noted during 2002 in Merionethshire (VC 48), Caernarvonshire (VC 49) and Anglesey (VC 52). There are 142 pages, A4, comb bound. May be purchased from John Harold, Hen Ardd, Carreg y Garth, Rhiwlas, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 4HD. Records may also be sent to the same address, although each county does in fact have a separate Recorder. Out of courtesy, please enclose an sae if you want a reply. —
EDITOR.